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Security Council

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English
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Letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter from Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, dated 28 February 2016.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**

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Annex to the letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

On behalf of the High Negotiations Committee for the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and as requested by the General Coordinator of the Committee, Riad Hijab, it is my honour to transmit to you a copy of a letter sent to the Secretary-General by the General Coordinator on 28 February 2016 (see enclosure). The letter discusses the gravity of continued violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic]

National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces

Ref.: 5/2016

28 February 2016

Sir,

I regret to inform you that although a truce came into effect on the morning of Saturday, 27 February 2016, the Russians, the Iranians, the Syrian regime, the foreign militias and their mercenary allies have continued to commit acts of aggression against the Syrian people.

In the first few minutes after the truce came into effect, the regime and its allies across Syria perpetrated numerous violations. Regime helicopters carried out seven raids, dropping barrel bombs on densely-populated areas and claiming numerous victims, many of them women and children. There were 24 instances of violations involving cannon fire, in addition to five land offensives. Truce violations took place in 26 different areas loyal to the moderate opposition.

On Sunday, 28 February 2016, Russian fighter jets carried out 26 air raids on areas loyal to factions that are committed to the truce. They used cluster bombs and thermobaric missiles, causing yet more civilian deaths and injuries.

The repeated violations committed by the regime have caused 29 fatalities and dozens of injuries, and densely-populated areas continue to be targeted. We therefore wish to make the following points.

1. Regrettably, the Russian Ministry of Defence has published a purported military map containing false information regarding zones of political influence and the distribution of forces on Syrian territory (http://youtu.be/MaYydEjdSzsSent). It has attributed that information to the United Nations in order to further its own political and military schemes, namely to exclude certain areas from the truce and continue its systematic bombardments and forced displacement. Those operations are an egregious assault on the people, unity and territorial integrity of Syria. We urge you to take the necessary action to respond to Russia's claims and bring an end to its violations.

2. We urge the United Nations and the Friends of Syria Group to take on the task of designating the areas included in the truce so that no acts of aggression can take place there. It is the only party that can fulfil that role with transparency and impartiality. The absence of clear lines of separation has enabled the regime and its allies to target densely-populated areas in a flagrant violation of the Security Council resolutions that threatens to undermine the truce.

3. The Syrian opposition forces have exercised the utmost restraint, and have thus far fully complied with their obligations under the truce. However, if the regime and its allies continue to commit crimes against the Syrian people, they will undermine the efforts of the international community to sustain the truce.

4. We agreed to the temporary truce primarily in order to respond to the international community's earnest efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian

people and help implement the humanitarian components of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), particularly paragraphs 12, 13 and 14. However, if no tangible progress is made in that regard, we will be impelled to search for other means to protect the Syrian people and bring an end to the violations. The Security Council must therefore take a firm stance on the issue before it is too late.

5. By persisting in committing such violations, the regime and allied forces would cause the collapse of the political process endorsed by the Security Council in a series of resolutions, the most recent of which is resolution 2268 (2016). The political process cannot move forward if the suffering of the Syrian people is used as a weapon for political and military gain. It would be impossible to resume negotiations under such duress.

This dangerous situation poses a clear and present threat to regional and international peace and security. The United Nations must therefore intervene immediately to end the ongoing war crimes against the Syrian people and preserve its unity and territorial integrity.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Hijab**
General Coordinator, High Negotiations Committee